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SUBJECT: DISCREPANCIES IN OFFICIAL CASUALTY FIGURES
HIGHLIGHT DEFICIENCIES IN GRP INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM

Classified By: Acting Pol/C Joseph L. Novak for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S/NF) Summary: A total of 2,838 persons were killed in calendar year 2005 during encounters between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and insurgents/terrorists. The majority (2,268) of these casualties were AFP soldiers (458) and NPA members (1,810), according to AFP statistics recently released to the press. The National Security Council, the Anti-Terrorism Task Force, and the police all have different sets of data that do not match up with each other. Due to a lack of data from past years, it is unclear whether these GRP agencies' figures represent an uptick or not, but there was no sense from interlocutors that there had been large spikes comparatively. Underlying the discrepancies are the lack of professionalized GRP intelligence services and a comprehensive automated database on terrorism, among other problems. End Summary.

AFP Body Count Released to the Press

12. (U) According to AFP statistics released to the press on December 30, 2005, a total of 2,838 persons were killed in calendar year 2005 during 1,455 encounters between the AFP and insurgents/terrorists. The majority of these encounters -- 1,255 or 86 percent -- were between the AFP and New People's Army (NPA) with the remainder involving the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)-123; the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)-151; and the Misuari Breakaway Group (MBG)-26. A breakdown of casualties follows: NPA-1810; AFP-723; ASG-171; MILF-118; and MBG-16.

13. (SBU) The AFP said it suffered the greatest number of casualties (458) against the NPA, followed by 181 against the ASG, 68 against the MBG, and 16 against the MILF. The most deadly incident was a NPA land mine explosion on November 19, 2005, that left 9 soldiers dead and 20 others wounded.

The View from the NSC

14. (S/NF) The Director of the Office of Security Policy at the National Security Council (NSC), Carmina B. Acuna, told poloff on January 5 that the military statistics reported by the press on December 30 were released by AFP-Operations (J3). According to Acuna, NSC internal documents usually

cite figures from AFP-Intelligence (J2) and the National Coordinating Intelligence Agency (NICA) rather than AFP-J3 because these numbers were considered more carefully vetted.

15. (S/NF) Based on NSC data, there were a total of 483 fatalities from 830 encounters between GRP military/security forces and the NPA as of mid-December 2005. The NSC breakdown follows: AFP/police/paramilitary-193, civilian-144, and NPA/CPP-146. No data regarding GRP security force encounters with the ASG, MILF, and MBG were provided by Acuna. Acuna noted that -- although the NSC's casualty figures for calendar year 2005 would increase after data for the last two weeks of December was included -- the NSC's final tally would be far lower than the AFP numbers that appeared in the press relative to the NPA insurgency.

Anti-Terrorism Task Force Data

16. (S/NF) Undersecretary Ricardo R. Blancaflor, who is Director for Legal, Public Information and Advocacy at the GRP's Anti-Terrorism Task Force, informed poloff on January 9 that the ATTF was the central operational coordinating and policy body for the GRP's campaign against terrorism, but not a central clearinghouse for official statistics regarding all insurgency/terrorist incidents. For example, the ATTF focuses on Muslim terrorist groups, such as the ASG and Jemaah Islamiya, and not the NPA insurgency.

17. (C) According to the "Scorecard of the ATTF" that is contained in its year-end report for 2005, a total of 32 ASG members were killed in incidents as of December 27, 2005. No

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other casualty figures were listed. The scorecard also reflected that 159 terrorists were arrested, captured or surrendered as of December 27. The breakdown follows: ASG-134; suspected foreign nationals-10; other suspected terrorists-8, JI-4; and Rajah Solaiman Movement-3.

PNP Statistics

18. (S/NF) On January 11, Police Superintendent Dionardo B. Carlos from the PNP Office of the Secretariat, National Anti-Crime Task Force, provided poloff with data regarding NPA-related incidents. According to Carlos, there were a total of 350 casualties during 472 incidents in calendar year 2005. A total of 179 of these incidents were GRP initiated while the remaining 293 incidents were NPA initiated. The PNP breakdown of casualties for 2005 follows: NPA-124, AFP-94, civilians-88, PNP-30, and paramilitary-14. No data were provided for the ASG, JI, MILF, MBG, or RSM.

Explaining Discrepancies

19. (S/NF) In explaining the wide discrepancies over how GRP agencies collect and correlate data, Acuna of the NSC commented that there were shortcomings in the GRP's intelligence system such as inadequate data-sharing and validation among military/security agencies. Echoing Acuna's comments, Blancaflor of the ATTF acknowledged shortcomings in the GRP's intelligence system such as: inadequate information sharing, coordination, and validation; the lack of automated databases with photos; insufficient manpower and resources; and the difficulty in classifying an individual as a "member" of a terrorist organization as opposed to a "supporter," sympathizer, or "associate" partly due to the lack of consensus among GRP officials as to the meaning of these terms. According to the PNP's Carlos, the removal of dead bodies by insurgents/terrorists from encounter sites and lack of access by PNP personnel to some remote sites where

encounters occurred have made identification/validation of casualties very difficult for the PNP.

¶10. (S/NF) To address some of these problems, Blancaflor emphasized the need for speedy passage of anti-terrorism legislation. He also recommended the creation of an Anti-Terrorism Council that could function as the central clearinghouse for all data regarding terrorism. (Note: Both the House and Senate versions of proposed anti-terrorism legislation contain provisions for the creation of an Anti-Terrorism Council that would have the mandate to establish a comprehensive database on terrorism. End Note.)

Comment

¶11. (S/NF) Tracking the casualties in the GRP's campaign against insurgents/terrorists is clearly not an exact science. Due to a lack of data from past years, it is unclear whether these GRP agencies' figures represent an uptick or not, but there was no sense from interlocutors that there had been large spikes comparatively. (Note: Mission continues to try to obtain data on casualties from past years from the GRP, but information received so far is patchy. End Note.) As noted, underlying the discrepancies are the lack of professionalized GRP intelligence services and a comprehensive automated database on terrorism, among other problems. Critical to the future success of GRP counter-insurgency/terrorism efforts are the development of professionalized, technologically equipped, and well coordinated intelligence services that are able to command facts at their fingertips.

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